



USAID, PADF Launch Remittance-Based Economic Development Initiative (Program to commence with groups from El Salvador, Haiti, Mexico)

AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (USAID)

April 25, 2003

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF) have jointly launched an initiative to link U.S.-based Latin American and Caribbean immigrant communities with economic development projects in their countries of origin, USAID has announced.

In a press release issued April 25, USAID explained that "the pilot initiative will work with one partner group each from El Salvador, Haiti and Mexico to develop and implement productive activities in their home countries that generate income and create jobs."

"Based on the \$32 billion a year that Latin American and Caribbean immigrants send home, USAID recognizes the unique role that U.S.-based immigrants play in the economic stability and growth of their home countries," said Karen Harbert, USAID's deputy assistant administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean. John Sanbrailo, executive director of PADF, predicted that the USAID-PADF initiative "will help local immigrant groups become stronger participants in the region's economic development."

USAID said that the pilot project is part of PADF's broader "Transnational Community Development Initiative." After the pilot project is established, "training materials and web-based information will be disseminated to the several hundred immigrant organizations in the United States representing communities from all over Latin America and the Caribbean," USAID added.

Following is the text of the USAID press release, with further details:

(begin text)

U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Washington, D.C.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 25, 2003

USAID and PADF Launch Remittance-Based Economic Development Initiative

Washington, D.C. -- The Deputy Assistant Administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Karen Harbert, and Pan American Development Foundation Executive Director John Sanbrailo today launched an innovative initiative to

link U.S.-based Latin American and Caribbean immigrant communities with economic development projects in their countries of origin. The USAID-sponsored pilot initiative, starting today with training workshops for three U.S.-based immigrant groups, aims to strengthen immigrant hometown associations and similar groups to carry out economic development projects in the region. The pilot initiative will work with one partner group each from El Salvador, Haiti and Mexico to develop and implement productive activities in their home countries that generate income and create jobs.

"Based on the \$32 billion a year that Latin American and Caribbean immigrants send home, USAID recognizes the unique role that U.S.-based immigrants play in the economic stability and growth of their home countries," says Karen Harbert. "By forming partnerships with immigrant groups, we hope to achieve even greater impact from the significant volume of remittances to Latin America and the Caribbean and to increase productive community investments."

"The workshops we are starting today will help local immigrant groups become stronger participants in the region's economic development," Sanbrailo said. "Throughout the course of the next year, we will be working with representatives from Salvadoran, Haitian and Mexican groups present today to help design, implement and manage productive economic development projects in their countries of origin. We will also build on their experiences in organizing communities in the United States to raise funds and channel them to projects back home."

The pilot project is part of PADF's broader "Transnational Community Development Initiative," which will provide training and related materials for immigrant organizations, including project design, strategic planning, fund-raising, project management, and evaluation skills. Additionally, the activities will provide new opportunities and new avenues for these U.S.-based immigrant groups to deepen their involvement in the economic development of their respective countries of origin. The initiative also creates links with the private sector and foundations, which will support immigrant groups with matching funds and other resources.

As for the specific development projects, the D.C.-based National Organization for the Advancement of Haitians (NOAH) will work with local farmers to develop fruit-tree grafting and seedling projects. The Virginia-based United Salvadoran Civic Committee (USACC) will work with local agricultural cooperatives in El Salvador to produce and process organic fruits and vegetables for local and international sale. And the California-based Organization of Migrants for Ayoquezco (OMA) will work with their hometown to cultivate, process, and market nopal, a cactus commonly used for foodstuffs in Mexico.

Following this pilot project, training materials and web-based information will be disseminated to the several hundred immigrant organizations in the United States representing communities from all over Latin America and the Caribbean.

(end text)

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